

Course evaluation “Advanced Topics in HCI” Autumn 2014

Responsible teacher: Professor Kristina Höök, MID-group, CSC-school

Content

The course is formed around six seminars presenting work from the research front in HCI – often given by invited lecturers. Before each seminar, the student is expected to read a paper or book chapter that is subsequently presented in the seminar. After each seminar, a reflection of the seminar should be handed in. To finalise the course, students are expected to write a 4-page paper, showing that they picked up on what is happening in HCI and possibly shaping their research questions for their MSc-work.

The aim of the course is to let students show that: they can read, critically examine and relate to research papers and furthermore articulate their own work in the form of a short paper.

During autumn 2014, the course consisted of the following seminars:

- 6th of October: Professor Kristina Höök on Strong Concepts
- 13th of October: Associate Professor Jakob Tholander on [Eco-Friends](#) and [Do Categories have Politics](#)
- 5h of November: Professor Oskar Juhlin on [Fashionable Shape Switching – Explorations in Outfit-Centric Design](#)
- 10th of November: Professor Barry Brown on [Searchable Objects](#)
- 17th of November: PhD Jarmo Laaksolahti on [My Self and You: Tension in Bodily Sharing of Experience](#) and also [The lega: a device for leaving and finding tactile traces](#).
- 1st of December: Professor Kristina Höök on [somaesthetics](#).

Credits

The course corresponded to 3 ECTS-credits.

Literature

The course involved reading the following literature:

- Höök, K. and Löwgren, J.. 2012. Strong concepts: Intermediate-level knowledge in interaction design research. *ACM Trans. Comput.-Hum. Interact.* 19, 3, Article 23 (October 2012), 18 pages.
- Maria Normark and Jakob Tholander. 2014. Performativity in sustainable interaction: the case of seasonal grocery shopping in ecofriends. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '14)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 271-280.
- Suchman, L. (1993). Do categories have politics?. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)*, 2(3), 177-190.
- Juhlin, O., Zhang, Y., Sundbom, C., & Fernaeus, Y. (2013, April). Fashionable shape switching: explorations in outfit-centric design. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1353-1362). ACM.

- Brown, B., McGregor, M., & McMillan, D. (2015). Searchable Objects: Search in Everyday Conversation.
- Mentis, H. M., Laaksolahti, J., & Höök, K. (2014). My self and you: Tension in bodily sharing of experience. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction (TOCHI)*, 21(4), 20.
- Laaksolahti, J., Tholander, J., Lundén, M., Solsona Belenguer, J., Karlsson, A., & Jaensson, T. (2011, January). The lega: a device for leaving and finding tactile traces. In *Proceedings of the fifth international conference on Tangible, embedded, and embodied interaction* (pp. 193-196). ACM.
- Shusterman R. with comments by Höök, Bardzell and Stolterman. In: Soegaard, Mads and Dam, Rikke Friis (eds.). *The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction, 2nd Ed.*. Aarhus, Denmark: The Interaction Design Foundation. 2012.

Format

The course consists of six seminars. In each seminar, an article is introduced and then jointly discussed. Each seminar goes on for about 2 hours.

Before each occasion, students are asked to read the article. Afterwards, they hand in a one-page reflection on the seminar.

At the end of the course, students hand in a 4-page paper where they describes their own work – either based on some empirical work done in another course or work that may lead to their MSc-thesis work.

Participants

In total, 10 students followed the whole course.

Evaluation

The open-ended format, basing each seminar on a paper that has been recently published at the forefront of HCI-research, places quite high demands on the students. Some students find this a bit too challenging while others enjoy reading up on the most recent work in our field.

The students appreciated the discussions and in particular, they enjoyed the opportunity to link the literature to their own research topic and results.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed via google-forms, allowing students to give anonymous feedback. All 10 students replied to the questionnaire.

1. What is your overall impression of the course?

Very positive: 6

Positive: 3

Neutral: 1

Negative: 0

Very negative: 0

Comments:

- Very interesting seminars with fun topics!
- It gave me ideas for where to do my Master Thesis..
- Interesting but way too much work for the very few points given.

- Interesting course with nice atmosphere
- Fun course!

2. Did the course meet your expectations?

Yes, to a large extent: 5

Yes, to some extent: 4

I do not know: 1

No: 0

Comments:

- Because of the interesting seminars.
- I did not have any expectations.
- The amount of work was beyond what I expected.
- It forces me to read a lot of papers which is so good. And I also need to think aloud after I finish reading them.

3. How difficult did you find the course?

Very difficult: 0

Difficult: 9

Easy: 1

Very easy: 0

Comments:

- I would not say it was difficult but it was not easy either. The papers for the seminars could sometimes be a bit difficult.
- "This course differs from the courses from the first three years of my education, since we are given a lot of freedom to write anyway we want, which opens up the door for creativity I have not explored, and it was tough to get a grip about where the line goes between being too or extremely philosophical and to keep the thoughts on the matter of fact/report-that-is-reflected. Although, I would still prefer this way approach by a course, than the way we had to be studying during my first 3 years."
- In the sense that there was a lot of work. Is my message getting across here?
- It is my first semester here, so I don't know how to write the final paper, which is so hard for me.
- It's challenging to read articles on a high level

4. To follow the course, my prerequisites have been ...

More than enough: 1

Enough: 7

Not enough: 2

Comment: 0

5. What do you think about the amount of material in the course?

Far too much: 1

Too much: 1

About what I expected: 8

Not enough: 0

Comments:

- Jag hade hellre velat ha fler reflektioner än att behöva skriva den sista skrivuppgiften.
- I think it could be almost too much, just because of the amount of reading and reflecting about all six seminars. But on the other hand I think I have leard a lot from all seminars so it might be enough.

6. What do you think of the course material? Was it enough to learn the subject?

Good. Yes: 10

Average. Maybe: 0

Bad. Maybe not: 0

Comments:

- All of the seminars broaden my view very much.
- Yes. I can refer to the answer of the first question: "It gave me ideas for where to do my Master Thesis.."

7. What do you think about the course format, reading course with occasional meetings?

It made me take responsibility of my learning: 4

It worked fine, but would prefer lectures and tutorials: 5

I did not get enough guidance through the subjects: 1

Comment:

- Som jag skrev innan, hade gärna skippat final report och haft fler seminarier och fler reflektioner.
- I liked it!
- I prefer this format, because I had no choice but to indepently work my way through papers and follow up information on the Internet, and I have noticed that my knowledge of the different aspects in HCI got much broader, and in-depth, along the way.
- Reflection requires so much work that it would be enough without the four page essay on top.
- The last final report seems a bit unnecessary, I'd rather write about something new, instead of scrapping together a paper of something I've already written about before. But hey, easy 3 points!

8. Comments and suggestions on how to improve the course

- These seminar really helped to have better way to read articles as well as write it myself. Especially the reflection, the meaning is not repeating the article but inspiration ourselves, this way make me think deeper and reflect deeper.
- I think this course was very interesting and it gave me a lot of inspiration.
- I cannot think of any. I can say that the course is fine the way it is, nothing more or extra tasks should be added though, since the way it is, is already enough for 3 hp.

- See comments above. In summary, less work. If you didn't attend seminars it would be fine, but I don't believe that is what Kristina wants. So make reflection needed IF you did not attend seminar. At least for 2 of the 6 ones. So you write 4 reflections, attend 2 and 1 4-pager. Or perhaps attend 5/6 and no 4-pager? Lower workload and incentive attendance.
- Maybe we need a seminar room which is better for discussing